ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

463 economic system of the community and also of the place occupied in it by the various castes.

Most of the castes have a major craft or occupation which is their traditional monopoly. Besides this they are free to exploit certain other subsidiary sources of livelihood also. The Brahmin, besides functioning as the village priest, may also cultivate his land. The potter, the barber and the washerman occupy themselves mainly with their respective professions, but there is nothing to prevent them from accepting occasional work as field labourers.

● [464] In fact, during the busy agricultural season, when there is a heavy demand on the limited labour supply of the local group, efforts are made to persuade the artisan caste to send their womenfolk to work in the fields for daily wages. Notwithstanding this, a caste is identified with some occupation or other, and established social usage largely governs the modes of practice of this particular occupation.

In the chapter on Social Structure mention has been made of the fourteen village menials who work as semi-government functionaries, generally in return for the grant of a piece of rent-free land by the government. Their work lies mainly in the fields of their caste monopolies. It comprises personal services to touring government officials, as well as certain routine duties for the village as a whole.

437 463 A closer scrutiny of the economic system and its consequent bonds of mutual obligation and expectation reveals four major types of economic dealings and obligations within the caste network into which the community is organized. These are:

(i) Obligations to render to the agriculturists occupational services having a direct bearing on their agricultural activities. No immediate payment is expected for services of this kind. The agriculturists get their ploughs and other implements repaired by the carpenter every year as a matter of routine. Periodically the carpenter supplies new implements. In return for this, twice every year the cultivator gives a share to the carpenter when the crops are harvested. Services of an agricultural nature are generally expected and rendered on this basis. The extent of both the service and the payment is generally fixed by tradition, and depends very much on the size of the holding which the agriculturist is cultivating. Some castes offer their occupational services, even of a non-agricultural nature, to the agriculturists on the tacit understand-

1: Dube E-5 (1951-52) 1955 AW17 Telugu AW17

a number of years, according to law he acquires semi-proprietary rights over them. The landlord does not want this to happen, and so with a view to safeguarding his own interests he leases out his land to different persons in different years. A short-term lease is naturally not conducive to land improvement, for the person cultivating the land does not risk any investment in it. If he does improve it, in one of the following years the landlord may lease it out to someone else who offers to pay more than the person who improved the land. Secondly, those who hold most of the agricultural land in the village are interested in maintaining a supply of cheap agricultural labour, without which it would be impossible for them to cultivate their extensive fields. They benefit more by cultivating their land with the help of this labour, than by leasing out their land. If they leased out all their surplus land the cheap labour supply would appreciably diminish, and for want of competition wages of those who were still available would rise. To avoid this they choose to leave some of their land uncultivated, and thus we have the paradox of having in the same village many land-hungry families and several hundred acres of uncultivated land.

The land belongs to the family, and normally the head of the family exercises control over it. On the death of the father, the land and other agricultural property—such as tools, implements and livestock—are distributed equally among the brothers. Provision is made for the marriage of unmarried daughters as well as for the maintenance of the minor sons of the deceased. In very special cases, with the consent of all the brothers, a widowed sister is also given a small share. But this is a gratuity rather than a rightful share.

The agriculturists have considerable sentiment for their land and cattle. If adversity compels them to sell some of their fields or cattle, the day when this is done becomes a day of semi-mourning for the household. The hour of transfer is indeed a sad one, and the farmer will complete the necessary formalities with a heavy heart. For several days the family atmosphere remains overcast with gloom. The womenfolk may even wail and shed tears of real grief. In the sentiments of an Indian peasant, the Earth occupies a mother's position and parting with a fragment of it is nearly tantamount to separation from the mother. It is surprising how cattle become almost members of the agriculturist's family, and how

6:Spate N-4 (no date)1954 AW1 India
Telugu AW17

zone of the Orissa Hills. There are small deposits of lead (Nalgonda), copper and mica (Raichur), and graphite (Warangal), while the Ceded Districts have non-ferrous metals (manganese, antimony), corundum, and barytes; but most of the minerals here are associated with the bordering ranges to the E, and in any case are almost untouched. Golconda diamonds belong to history—and legend—rather than to modern economy. The forest resources around the Godavari are not very accessible, though it would seem that more use might be made of the river itself as an outlet, and power might be available from the rapids where it crosses the En Hills.

Population densities are not high—**170–200** in the Ceded Dts, **160–220** in Hyderabad. Villages are essentially tied to waterpoints, often in association with tanks, and generally built of mud or stone set in mud, with thatched roofs.[28]

Apart from Hyderabad City, towns are few and small. Warangal (**133,130**) is the largest, and of merely local importance; Bellary (56,148) is an important railway town and has small sugar and vanaspati (vegetable ghee) mills. Otherwise, except for cotton ginning and so on, industrial development is negligible: in 1949 Hyderabad had only 60,000 factory workers (probably mostly in the capital), 26,000 miners, 22,000 railwaymen.

Hyderabad (**1,085,722**) was in 1941 the fourth Indian city; it has since been outstripped by Delhi (Old and New together). Founded in 1589 by the Muslim king of Golconda, it was the capital of the Mogul Viceroyalty of the Deccan and of the independent state which arose on the Mogul ruins; old Golconda, an impressive hill-fortress, lies 5 miles to the W. The significance of Hyderabad is essentially administrative and cultural, as is evidenced by the high proportions of Urdu and Tamil speakers; the former represent the semi-feudal class dominant in the state until 1948, the latter the clerkly bureaucracy. The city is close-packed, mostly unplanned, with palaces perhaps more remarkable for size than beauty, surrounded by vast tanks. Most notable of modern buildings is perhaps the fine Osmania University. Six miles to the N is the enormous cantonment of Secunderabad, designed to afford protection to Our Faithful Ally the Nizam, and perhaps not less to ensure his continued faithfulness—a precaution not unwarranted in the stirring and in all senses intriguing days when the rising British power was at grips with the Marathas and the Mysore of Haidar Ali and Tipu, and when French influence was not altogether dead in the Deccan.

Telangana: Aspect and Prospect

Hyderabad, with its 82,313 sq mls and **18,655,108** people, its own internal posts (with yellow pillar-boxes), its integration of road services with the Nizam's State Railway, and with a reasonably good administration, was a

[28] W. Burns (ed.), *Sons of the Soil* (1941), 5.

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AW1 India
Telugu AW17

438 at a reduced price, generally 13 to 15 rupees per candy, while the market price in summer will be Rs. 23 to 29 per candy. Last year, 249 owing to the appearance of a competing company, Messrs. Simpson & Co., the price was Rs. 35 to 42 per candy. No interest is charged for such debts. (3) They invariably use false stones in weighing the jaggery in the fields, while in the village the company's stones are used. This results in an enormous profit.

With these three sources of profit, the private capitalist is able to realize a profit of Rs. 5 at least per cart (of 8 bags) while daily he sends 3 carts at least to the company's agent. The total export of the village during the summer will be from 17,000 to 20,000 bags; this year (1917) it is 18,000 bags, i.e., 6,000 candies.

556 The rich capitalist makes the largest profit out of this[1] trade. Many of the villagers are now a class of capitalists, great or small. Many that were poor three or four years ago are now able to invest a few hundreds and start independent businesses in this line. There are three people who invested about Rs. 30,000 each this year.

465 The toddy tappers are not materially better off. As a class they are only a little above the level of absolute poverty, while individually, there are only four or five who own a property of Rs. 500. Though their gross earnings are from Rs. 20 to 25 for the three months, the net income will be Rs. 6 to 8 only.

The village barber and washerman earn at least Rs. 30 to 35 during the three months. The lime dealer earns 50 to 60 rupees. The Pariahs who carry firewood get wages at the rate of 4 annas to 6 annas per day. Owners of carts get rent at the rate of Rs. 2 per turn to carry jaggery from the field-huts to Nidadavolu, the headquarters of the company. Makers of tin-pots, used in boiling the toddy, get 100 to 150 rupees. Pariah women prepare baskets of palmyra leaves to hold the jaggery, for which they are paid Re. 1 per 100. Brahmans are employed to prepare the accounts and are paid Rs. 10 per mensem.

Besides these payments for services rendered (which are in the shape of jaggery in most cases) there are certain extra perquisites or "mamuls" which the toddy tapper is compelled to pay. These illegitimate exactions mount up to thousands of rupees. The village servants also get presents, while the coolies are profited by carrying [545] rice or other articles to the fields. There are many small shops opened by retail traders in the fields themselves for the benefit of the tappers; while the performance of two or three dramas, based on some popular mythological story by country actors is not of rare occurrence.

• 464 The effects on the village are innumerable and many sided. One of the greatest difficulties for the Indian labourer is want of proper employment; it is no exaggeration to say that many families are reduced to poverty, simply for want of sufficient local demand for their labour. This village is to a certain extent relieved of this anxiety during a season when, the fields being fallow, they have no agricultural occupation to attend to. Many a poor family would have long ago left the village but for this attraction. Industrially, it has raised the efficiency of every craft, by providing it with more work to turn out. While in all the other seasons the whole village is entirely agricultural in character, in summer it can be said to be industrial and commercial in tone.

[1] [i.e., jaggery. -- Analyst]